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Case Study - The Organization and Promotion of Health Services

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Case Study: The Organization and Promotion of Health Services



Foundation for Sustainable Development (FSD): Pro Mujer Cochabamba, Bolivia

Introduction

Our eight-week partnership took place in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Cochabamba is the third largest city in Bolivia with a population of 630,587. Our group partnered with Pro Mujer, an international microfinance organization founded in El Alto, Bolivia in 1990. Pro Mujer's vision, as detailed on their website, is "a Latin America where all women thrive" and their mission is "to empower underserved women to achieve their full potential" ("Pro Mujer- Who We Are," n.d.). Pro Mujer empowers the women they serve through providing access to microfinance loans and communal banks, capacity-building workshops, and health services. Throughout the department

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of Cochabamba there are six centers: Muyurina, Alalay, Coraca, Cala Cala, Quillacollo, and Sacaba. Each of these centers offers access to the microfinance, capacity-building and varied health services that Pro Mujer provides to their clients. The GESI group, organized through the Foundation for Sustainable Development, primarily worked within the health services sector of Pro Mujer. The health services that are offered to the clients served by Pro Mujer include discounted rates on general practitioner services, ultrasounds, laboratory tests, and dentistry services. The prices of these private health services are extremely competitive compared to the external costs of using public healthcare. Because Bolivia is run by a socialist government, health care is subsidized. However, because the government provides free or low-cost medical services, the public infrastructure for health services is strained due to an excess of patients and a lack of funding. Pro Mujer plays a significant role in the community through providing easy access to both doctors and affordable healthcare for the women they serve. Pro Mujer aims to be accessible to every woman that seeks their services by requiring that at every center there are staff members who speak and understand Quechua, an indigenous language that is spoken by many Bolivians, some as their only language.

GESI Team Member Assets

Name	Major	Assets
Sarah Freschi	Learning and Organizational Change and Global Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Positive- Good Listener
Sneha Nair	International Relations and Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Organized- Leadership
Cindy Ramos-Rico	Social Policy and Sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Native Spanish Speaker- Objective Mindset
Guilherme Vendemiatti	Economics and Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Quantitative- Problem Solving Skills

Pro Mujer Staff Assets

Position	Assets
Director of Pro Mujer Cochabamba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of all six Pro Mujer centers - Objective mindset in the field, had a better understanding of what can and can't work
Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managed the health service sector in all six centers - Knowledge behind health services - Connection to doctors and dentists at the other centers - Had access to all internal meetings with the health staff
Financial Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to the funds for Pro Mujer and our project - Knowledge and ability to purchase fairly priced materials for our project
Administrative Assistant & Driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided us knowledge about the city of Cochabamba - Access to a car in order for us to purchase our materials
Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to connect us with staff members in different centers - Knowledge about Pro Mujer and Cochabamba - Knowledge of fairly priced materials

Other Pro Mujer Assets

Pro Mujer is an integral member of their community, and has been for many years, which means that they have gained a large amount of support and trust throughout the community. Additionally, Pro Mujer is an international organization, headquartered in New York, New York. Due to the large size of the organization, the individual centers have access to a lot of resources and assistance from the headquarters and other centers, both within Bolivia and throughout Latin America. In our short time working with Pro Mujer Cochabamba we were able to experience this sharing of knowledge and expertise throughout the different centers by visiting each center and speaking with many different Pro Mujer employees. Finally, our group primarily was based out of the central center, Muyurina, which meant that we had easy access to our supervisors,

other prominent figures, and large amounts of office and work-space. Muyurina also offered a more robust set of health services when compared to the other centers, including a dentist and ultrasound tests.

FSD Assets

The Foundation for Sustainable Development (FSD) staff was extremely helpful throughout the duration of our project. They provided guidance throughout each step of our project and facilitated easy communication between themselves, our team, and Pro Mujer. Additionally, the host families that FSD arranged for us to stay with were excellent resources in learning about how Bolivian health care functions and what Pro Mujer's role within the larger context of Bolivia. Our host families also provided insight and advice on our project and provided helpful feedback, especially during the initial few weeks when we were unsure of how to proceed.

The Project

Our Introduction to the Organization:

The first two weeks of our time in-country with Pro Mujer served as our integration period into the organization. The organization welcomed us into their work culture and we had the opportunity to both observe the general practices of the organization and speak with our supervisors extensively about where our team could be of most use to the organization. Our first two days of work consisted of reading over several informational packets in order to understand the organization's history, goals, and ethics and meeting with our supervisors: the director of Pro Mujer Cochabamba and the head doctor of the Pro Mujer Cochabamba health clinics. At our initial meeting with our supervisors, they informed us that our group would primarily focus on the health services sector of Pro Mujer Cochabamba as there was already another FSD Intern assisting with the Capacity Building Workshops. Additionally, we were not placed to work within the microfinance sector of the organization because not only did we not have a lot of experience within microfinance, but that sector is also the most robust and well-formed sector of Pro Mujer Cochabamba. Thus, we started to explore our options within health services. At this same meeting, our supervisors presented several potential project topics that they were interested in us pursuing within health services, placing the most emphasis on a project idea titled "The Organization and Promotion of Health Services." This initial project idea consisted of our team spending half of our time in-country assisting with the launching and marketing of three new dentistry clinics within the Cochabamba area and the other half of our time assisting the team of doctors with filing that they had fallen behind on due to their strenuous schedules. We decided to keep this project in mind as we continued to observe and learn about the organization more.

We spent the rest of the first week visiting various centers throughout Cochabamba. We split up, were paired with a doctor, and traveled individually to one of the four different centers in order to efficiently observe each center. These two days spent at our respective centers allowed for in-depth conversations to take place between our team members and the doctors. The doctors were extremely helpful in introducing us to each center and in answering all of our initial questions. Throughout these two days, we collectively realized the struggle that the doctors had in keeping up with patient paperwork with their busy schedules of serving a large number of community members and patients each day, often spilling into overtime hours. However, due to difficulties reading doctor's notes on patient files, we were ineffective in assisting with their filing needs. We were also concerned about placing the emphasis of our project on assisting with filing because even though we probably could have made a dent on the filing that was behind and needed to be caught up on, we knew that it would ultimately be unsustainable because the filing would pile up again as soon as we stopped. We discussed these issues with our supervisor, who agreed that while filing would be helpful, it did not make sense to be a major component of our project. This led our GESI team to more seriously consider the other component of the potential project: assisting with the launching of the three new dentistry clinics.

One barrier that we faced throughout our introductory period to the organization was getting an understanding the inner-workings of Pro Mujer in such a short period of time. Pro Mujer is an extremely large organization, especially when viewing the organization as a whole. As discussed before, the size of the organization was an asset because of the resources and structure provided. However, because we were only at Pro Mujer for eight weeks and primarily worked within health services from the beginning of our internship, we struggled to fully understand each sector and how they operated alongside each other. Because of the time that it took us to finally get a grasp on how the organization operates, we decided to create another component to our project: a resource guide for incoming interns. The goal for this element of our project was to hopefully ensure a quicker and steadier transition into the organization for future FSD and GESI interns for the summers to come.

The Encuesta (Interview) Period:

After sitting down again with the head doctor of Pro Mujer Cochabamba, we decided to compile a list of questions to ask socias (business women who have access to the health services at Pro Mujer) about their experience with dentists in the past and about their knowledge of the services that Pro Mujer currently offers them. Our goal for this encuesta period was to gain more information about the socias and their dentistry needs, particularly in relation to Pro Mujer. Additionally, Pro Mujer already had one dentist located at the Muyurina office. However, from speaking with the head doctor and that particular dentist herself, we learned that she was not seeing very many patients. Therefore, we also had hopes of gaining some insight as to how we

could better market the dentistry service that already exists, so that dentist could serve more patients, and the dentistry services that had plans to be opened in the near future.

Over the course of three days we interviewed around 70 socias across three different centers: Alalay, Cala Cala, and Coraca. The list of questions we asked can be viewed in Appendix A. We chose to conduct our interviews at these particular centers because they were the locations that would soon be opening their own dentistry services. Although a language barrier was certainly a challenge throughout the interviews, especially for team members with more limited Spanish skills, the process of interviewing and speaking with socias provided us with a lot of information on the needs of the community regarding Pro Mujer dentistry services. We tabulated the encuestas in an excel document and synthesized the data into information points that would be useful to our group as we proceeded with finalizing our project, as well as the organization as a whole. We learned that approximately 64% of socias only visit the dentist when they have pain, rather than visiting the dentist for preventative procedures. Additionally, while the majority of the socias reported brushing their teeth two times a day, not nearly as many socias reported regularly using dental floss. We also learned that only 57% of socias knew that Pro Mujer already offered dentistry services, and that only 28% of socias knew where they could actually access those services. This information revealed a need within Pro Mujer to more effectively advertise both the dentistry clinic that was already in operation as well as prepare to market the three clinics that would soon be opened.

Deciding on the Project:

Based on the results of our encuestas and the initial plans of our supervisor, we decided to move forward with our project, dividing up our goals into four objectives:

1. Market and assist with the launching of the new dentistry clinics at Alalay, Cala Cala, and Coraca.
2. Develop further marketing resources for other general health services offered throughout the clinics.
3. Provide a foundation and informational guide for future interns through creating a flash drive of resources from past projects.
4. Support ongoing projects of the organization through creating a more welcoming and professional health consultation environment through improving the office aesthetics (this objective was added later on in our project and will be discussed in the following section).

Execution of the Project:

Our project started to come together during the second half of our time in-country. Throughout the last four weeks of our time with Pro Mujer we finalized the marketing materials for the Pro Mujer Cochabamba health offices: printing 2,000 educational dentistry brochures, 2,000 marketing flyers, and four “Get to Know Your Dentist” posters for the newly hired dentists. We worked with a printing company that Pro Mujer had been working with for many years already; however, throughout the process of printing materials, we encountered several challenges. Due to the quantity of materials, the actual process of printing took a lot longer than originally expected. There was also a lack of clear communication between the owner of the printing company and our team. There were several times that the owner would give us a time to pick up the materials, only to postpone the pickup to later date after we had already arrived at her office. Although we understood there were external influences at play such as printer malfunctions and WiFi access, the fact that the print shop was 40 minutes from our office resulted in some lost time.

Once we were able to obtain all of our printed materials, we were very fortunate to have the help of the community to prep the materials. During the inauguration of the Coraca dentistry clinic, community members and *socias* assisted our team in folding and preparing the 2,000 brochures for distribution. From there, we were able to divide the brochures, flyers, and posters (see Appendices B and C). We then delivered them to their respective centers by separating them by *asesoras* (employees that led workshops within the communal banks). Communal banks consist of around 8-10 *socias* and each communal bank is assigned an *asesora* who serves as the liaison between the larger Pro Mujer organization and the specific communal bank (Picture 1, below,



shows a communal bank meeting during the Alalay inauguration celebration). *Asesoras* often give a small workshop to the communal banks they work with, including topics such as leadership and health information. The goal for our brochures was to have the *asesora* guide the women through the dentistry information, fielding questions throughout the process. We delivered the flyers to the doctors to distribute within their clinics in

order to promote the new dentistry clinics across all Pro Mujer Cochabamba centers. Because many women were unaware of the dentistry services they already had access to, we decided that learning the information from their doctor instead of directly from our team would be most effective.

During the final weeks, we were able to successfully assist with the inauguration of two dentistry clinics. Our original plan was to inaugurate three; however, the dates for the third inauguration were constantly pushed back due to logistical problems, and, unfortunately, we were not able to participate in it. The first inauguration at Alalay occurred halfway into our time at Pro Mujer while the second inauguration occurred closer to the end of our stay, at Coraca. We assisted by blowing up red and white balloons to decorate the clinic, participating in a prayer service led by a priest, and mingling with socias and their children while we passed out snacks and drinks as a form of celebration. Picture 2, to the right, shows the priest and an employee at the Alalay inauguration blessing ceremony.



When discussing our budget with the director of Pro Mujer Cochabamba, she expressed a desire to utilize a large portion of our budget on purchasing new chairs for each of the health clinics and for the larger meeting room. The chairs in the health clinics were worn down and made of wood, which meant they were difficult to clean, an important consideration especially within a health clinic setting. We were also asked to purchase paint and assist with the repainting of old furniture within the health clinics.



At first, we were concerned with these requests because we did not see a direct correlation between these purchases and the sustainability of our project. However, after looking at the greater needs of the organization, we decided that painting the clinics ourselves as opposed to hiring a painting service was in fact a good use of our time and the budget (as seen in Picture 3, to the right). We also decided to go ahead with purchasing the chairs because the old

furniture was a nuisance to both the socias and the doctors. Thus, the painting of the health clinic furniture and purchase of new chairs resulted in an additional project component and objective: improving the health clinic aesthetics to create a more welcoming environment for the socias.

As our time was coming to an end at Pro Mujer, we felt strained on time because a lot of our work was not finalized until the last week. This could be seen through the creation of the flash drive, the development of the health services brochure template, and purchasing all of the remaining items our last week. During the second to last week, we began to compile the information we felt was most significant in our time at Pro Mujer and turned them into files on a flashdrive to be passed down to future interns. These files consisted of our intern project details (work plan, marketing materials, etc), information about Pro Mujer, and local assets. We hope this platform will serve as a reference for future interns, allowing them to look back at what was done during our time and either expand on the projects or alter future projects by assessing how successful ours was in the community. This flash drive was left with the director of Pro Mujer Cochabamba so she could pass it on to future interns.

The template of the health brochure was also created during our last week with Pro Mujer. Because of the success of our educational dentistry brochure, our supervisor requested that we create a template of a health service brochure that incorporated all of the health services provided within each center, not just dentistry services. In order to complete this new brochure, we met with our supervisor to solidify what information was going to be incorporated into the template. While we did not have enough money in our budget to follow through on the printing of this new brochure, through creating the template the organization can print it when they are able to. We spoke with our supervisor about continuing to update the materials we had created throughout our time and left her in charge of delegating the updating and printing of our marketing materials to the appropriate staff-- whether they are permanent staff or future FSD interns.

Conclusion

Overall, our team is proud of the outcomes of our project. Through working together with the organization and community members, we feel that the work put forth ultimately had a positive overall impact on the organization. At the very least we believe that the results from the encuestas gave, and will continue to give, the organization a more detailed and holistic view about the awareness of the socias in relation to the health services offered. Pro Mujer is a large organization and we recognize that any project with a duration of only 8-weeks can only have so large of an impact, something that we were and continue to be aware of.

Future Possibilities:

Looking back on our project, we see several future opportunities for the organization/future interns to continue investigating. First and foremost, there are still three Pro Mujer Cochabamba centers that do not have dentistry services. The organization expressed interest in eventually having a dentist at each of the centers, meaning that continued marketing and assistance with the opening of those dentistry clinics will likely be needed. Additionally, although we were not ultimately able to assist with the filing needs in the doctor offices, we believe that there may be a more efficient way to go about filing patient records and information. Creating a new and easy-to-use filing system would allow the doctors to spend more time face-to-face with their patients rather than spending excessive amounts of time after work catching up on filing.

Reflections:

Things we learned about international development through working with Pro Mujer:

- Sustainability is not a black and white concept. Throughout the first couple of weeks of work, whenever our team/the organization had an idea for our project we would ask ourselves: “Is this sustainable?” However, we ultimately learned that the answer to that question is oftentimes not a simple yes or no. We learned that sustainability cannot be measured based on a certain length of time; to us, sustainability is more about whether or not it is making a positive impact in the community.
- Change does not happen overnight. While in country, we became aware that while our project would have a positive impact to the organization, we were not going to be able to address all the challenges the organization was facing.
- Relationships are valuable. The relationships that we built throughout our time in Cochabamba were what made working there and living there so enjoyable. Without building relationships with the staff at Pro Mujer and with our host families, we would not have been able to complete our project.

Acknowledgements:

First and foremost, we would like to thank Pro Mujer Cochabamba for kindly welcoming us into their community and allowing us to observe and participate in the incredible work that they do for so many Bolivian women and families. We also would like to thank the FSD Site Team for assisting with our transition to Cochabamba and for providing constant support throughout the duration of our project. Finally, we would like to thank our host families for welcoming us into their homes and for providing invaluable insight to Bolivian healthcare and culture.

Sneha Nair (St. Andrews University) Guilherme Vendemiatti (Northwestern University) contributed to this paper.

Appendix A

The formal list of questions we asked the 70 socias we interviewed.

1. ¿Ve un dentista por lo menos una vez por año? **Si / No**
 - a. ¿Ve un dentista para procedimientos preventiva o solo cuando tiene dolor?
Solo con dolor / Preventiva
 - b. ¿Dónde visita(ó)?
 - c. ¿Como fue su experiencia?
 - d. ¿Cuánto pagó?
 - e. ¿Piensa que fue un precio demasiado caro? **Sí - No**
 - f. ¿Fue un dentista público o privado?
 - g. ¿Cuál es el máximo que pagaría por un servicio básico de dentista?
 - h. (si no) Cuando tiene un diente malo (carie u otra cosa), ¿que haces?
2. ¿Con qué frecuencia se cepilla los dientes?
Dos veces al día Una vez al día después de cada comida otra_____
3. ¿Con qué frecuencia se limpia los dientes con hilo dental?
Dos veces al día Una vez al día después de cada comida otra_____
4. ¿Piensa que es importante visitar el dentista? ¿Porque?
5. ¿Cuántos hijos pequeños tiene? ¿Los llevan al dentista por lo menos una vez por año?
6. ¿Sabe que Pro-Mujer ofrece servicios de odontología? **Sí - No**
7. ¿Sabe en que centros tiene dentistas? **Sí - No** Cual centro?
8. ¿Si tuviera Pro-Mujer consultorios odontológicos los usaría usted?

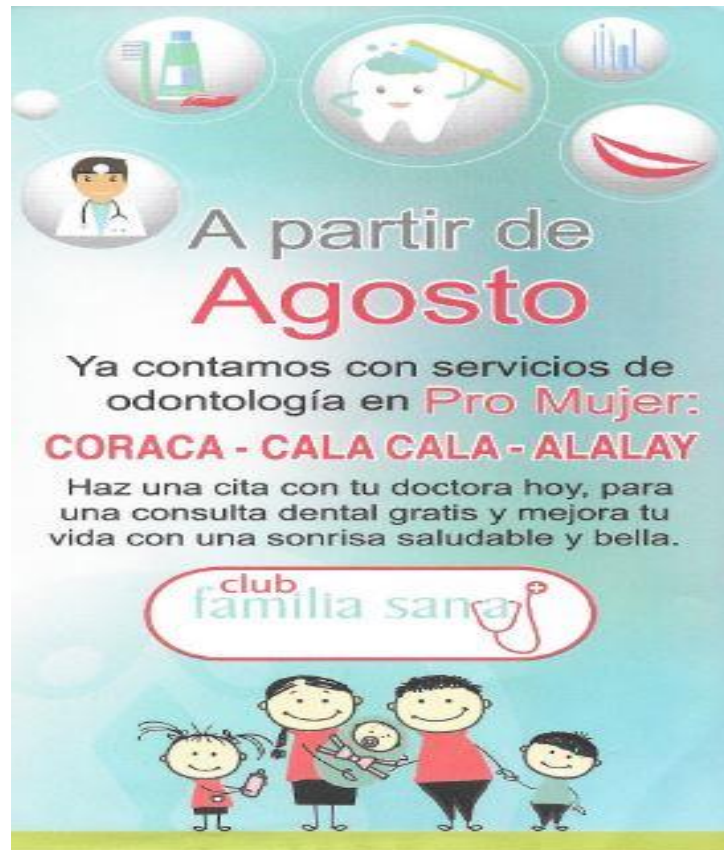
Appendix B:

This is the inside portion of the Pro Mujer educational dentistry brochure.

<h3>Como cepillar sus dientes</h3>  <p>Empieza con un cepillo de dientes, aplicando una suficiente cantidad de pasta de dientes para cubrir todo el cepillo.</p>  <p>Siguiente, empieza a cepillar los dientes con el cepillo. Realizando movimientos circulares, cepilla los dientes anteriores y posteriores. Asegúrete que te cepilles los dientes exterior y a los dientes interiores, y sobre la línea de la encías. Cepilla por un mínimo a 2 minutos.</p>  <p>Después de cepillar tus dientes, enjuágate la boca con agua.</p>  <p>Lava el cepillo con agua para quitar toda la pasta dental. Repita el proceso entero un mínimo de dos veces cada día.</p>	<h3>Como usar hilo dental</h3>  <p>Antes o después de cepillarte los dientes, dos veces al día, comienza con hilo dental.</p>  <p>Usa suficiente hilo dental para que se puede envolver alrededor de los dedos del medio. Utilice el pulgar y los dedos índices para guiar el hilo dental.</p>  <p>Facilita el hilo dental entre dos dientes y forma una "C" contra la superficie de un diente. Jala el hilo para que quede ajustada alrededor del diente y guíe hacia arriba y hacia abajo.</p>  <p>Repita para cada lado de los dientes y no te olvides de los dientes posteriores.</p>	<h3>NUESTROS SERVICIOS</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profilaxis Dental- Lavado y pulido de los dientes • Curación Con Resina- Dientes con caries • Extracción Dental- Sacar un diente • Fluorización- Dientes sanos para que sean mas resistentes a las caries • Sellantes- Dientes sanos que no tienen caries • Endodoncia Unirradicular- Muelas con dolor al frío o calor • Endodoncia Multirradicular- Muelas con dolor al frío y calor • Tartrectomia- Dientes con sarro, placa bacteriana y manchas superficiales • Blanqueamiento Dental • Erosiones- Dolor al frío o al cepillarse a nivel del cuello del diente • Pulpotomia- Solo en niños dolor al frío y calor, caries profunda.
	<h3>Como utilizar nuestros servicios</h3> <div> <div>1 PREGUNTA</div> <div>Pregunta a tu doctora, asesora, o recepcionista para hacer una cita con tu dentista.</div> <div>?</div> </div> <div> <div>2 RECUERDA</div> <div>Recuerda traer tus papeles correctas para acceder a una consulta con tu dentista.</div> <div></div> </div>	<div> <div>3 ASISTE</div> <div>Asiste a tu cita y espera tu turno en la sala de espera.</div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div>4 SONRÍE</div> <div>Para tener una sonrisa más brillante, haz una cita con tu dentista cada 6 meses o una vez cada año.</div> <div></div> </div>

Appendix C

This is the marketing flier for the inauguration of the dentistry clinics in Coraca, Cala Cala, and Alalay.



Works Cited

Pro Mujer - Who We Are. (n.d.). Retrieved August 1, 2018, Retrieved from <https://promujer.org/get-know-us/who-we-are/>